

The Traditional Four-Step Method for Cooking Dry Beans

Dry beans are an incredibly nutritious, versatile and inexpensive ingredient. **The cost of one ½ cup serving of dry beans is about one-third the cost of canned beans.** Cooking with dry beans is easy and rewarding, but to cook with dry beans versus canned beans you need to follow four simple steps.

STEP 1: Clean the Beans

- Plate the beans in a shallow layer in a pie plate, baking sheet, or bar pan.
- Pick out and discard any foreign objects like leaves, small stones or twigs, as well as any broken beans.



STEP 2: Rinse the Beans

- Place the beans in a colander or strainer and rinse them under cold running water.



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STEP 3: Soak the Beans

- There are three soaking methods (see next page) you can use, the Hot Soak Method, the Traditional Soak Method, and the Quick Soak Method. The Hot Soak Method is the recommended method because it reduces cooking time and gas-producing compounds the most and it produces consistently tender beans.



STEP 4: Cook the Beans

- Place beans in a large stock pot and cover with fresh, cold water.
- Place over medium heat; keep cooking water at a gentle simmer to prevent split skins.
- Since beans expand as they cook, add warm water periodically during the cooking process to keep the beans covered.
- Stir beans occasionally throughout the cooking process to prevent sticking.
- Beans take 30 minutes to 2 hours to cook, depending on the variety. Beans should be tender but not mushy.



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Bean Soaking Methods

The three different soaking methods vary in the amount of time required for adequate soaking. **The “hot soak” method typically is recommended because it reduces cooking time and gas-producing compounds the most while consistently yielding tender beans.**

| Hot Soak <i>Recommended Method!</i> | Traditional Soak <i>Best Method for Pressure Cooking Beans!</i> | Quick Soak <i>Fastest Method!</i> |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Place beans in a large pot and add 10 cups of water for every 2 cups of beans. | 1. Pour cold water over beans to cover. | 1. Place beans in a large pot and add 6 cups of water for every 2 cups of beans. |
| 2. Heat to boiling and boil for an additional 2 to 3 minutes. | 2. Soak beans for 8 hours or overnight. | 2. Bring to boil and boil for an additional 2 to 3 minutes. |
| 3. Remove beans from heat, cover and let stand for 4 hours. | 3. Drain beans and discard soak water. NOTE: cold water starts, but does not complete the rehydration process, so the beans will appear wrinkled after soaking. They will fully rehydrate during cooking.) | 3. Remove beans from heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour. |
| 4. Drain beans and discard soak water. | 4. Rinse beans with fresh, cool water. | 4. Drain beans and discard soak water. |
| 5. Rinse beans with fresh, cool water. | | 5. Rinse beans with fresh, cool water. |

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For Best Results, follow these Cooking Tips!

- Keep cooking water at a **gentle simmer** to prevent split skins.
- Since beans expand as they cook, **add warm water periodically** during the cooking process to keep the beans covered.
- **Stir beans occasionally** throughout the cooking process to prevent sticking.
- You can “**bite test**” **beans for tenderness**. Beans should be tender, but not mushy. If beans are not tender after the specified cooking time, the reason could be altitude, hard water, or the age of the beans. Keep cooking and “bite test” again in 10-15 minutes for tenderness.
- **Drain beans immediately after they reach the desired tenderness** to halt the cooking process and prevent over-cooking.
- **Onions may be added at any time** during the cooking process. For a stronger onion flavor, add them during the last half-hour of cooking.
- **Herbs and spices** like oregano, parsley, thyme, and garlic may be added at any time during cooking.
- **Wait to add acidic ingredients** like lemon juice, vinegar, tomatoes, chili sauce, catsup, or molasses until after beans have been soaked and are fully cooked. Adding ingredients rich in calcium or acids too early in the cooking process can prevent the beans from becoming tender.